MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
HELD IN WASHINGTON, D. C., MAY 7, 1920.

The seventh meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts during the fiscal year 1920 was held in its office at 1729 New York Avenue, northwest, Washington, D. C., Friday, May 7, 1920.

The following members were present:

Mr. Moore, Chairman;
Mr. Greenleaf;
Mr. Sergeant Kendall; and
Mr. Fraser.

Colonel Ridley, Secretary and Executive Officer, was absent on account of illness.

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m.

1. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE PRECEDING MEETING: The minutes of the preceding meeting held in Washington, D. C., March 26, 1920, were approved.

2. FLAG AND FLORAL EMBLEM FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA: Under date of March 30, 1920, Representative Gould referred to the Commission Bill H. R. 13311, "Providing for the adoption of a flag and floral emblem for the government of the District of Columbia", introduced by Congressman Smith of Idaho. The Commission gave the matter consideration and decided that it is one requiring the study of an artist, in addition to the consideration to be given by the Commissioners of the District of Columbia and the Commission of Fine Arts, and that should Congress enact the legislation proposed in order to obtain a suitable design for a flag an appropriation of not less than one thousand dollars should be made. (Exhibit A).

3. MEMORIAL TO NEGRO SOLDIERS AND SAILORS: Under date of April 3, 1920, the Commission received the following letter from the House Committee on the Library:

> "At a meeting of the Committee on the Library held yesterday, it was recommended that copies of Bills H. R. 5131 and H. R. 3613, introduced by Representatives Dyer and Sherwood respectively, be referred to the Commission of Fine Arts with request that the Chairman of the Committee on the Library be advised as to what sites there may be on Government property within the District of Columbia, which in the opinion of your Commission might be suitable for the erection thereon of a memorial to the negro soldiers and sailors, in case the Committee on the Library decides to take favorable action in the premises.
>
> The Chairman would appreciate it if he could have your advices in this regard at the earliest possible date."

The Commission gave the matter careful consideration in connection with a general discussion of the problem of erecting war memorials in the District of Columbia, and while recognizing the services of the Negro soldiers and sailors and that of other divisions of the population the Commission thought that no action with regard to designating a site for the memorial proposed should be taken until such time when in the judgment of Congress it shall be decided to signalize in some appropriate way the participation of the United States in the Great War. (Exhibit B).

4. WHOLESALE TERMINAL, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA: Mr. Salvatore Scalco, President and Treasurer of the National Fruit Growers Association, a Washington concern which comprises about forty dealers, appeared before the Commission and urged the establishment in the District of Columbia of a wholesale terminal for all merchants who deal in fruits and general market supplies so as to simplify the process of bringing products from the producer to the consumer, which would result in a saving of many thousands of dollars annually. Mr. Scalco advised that the site selected was one near the Bureau of Engraving (Power House Plant site) where products could be received readily from five railroad lines, particu-

larly the railroad from the south, and which would enable them also to receive supplies by water. The Commission advised that this site had been set aside for a proposed power house which, however, had not been built, and that the proper place for the wholesale terminal would be along the Anacostia Branch just above the Navy Yard where the railroad, water, and street car facilities exist, and that this is the locality which has been designated for commercial purposes. The Commission thought that a wholesale terminal near the Bureau of Engraving would bring it very near Potomac Park. However, should the Company agree to build a first-class terminal and Congress and the District Commissioners would agree to its location there the Commission of Fine Arts would interpose no objection to its construction at that location. Before taking further action Mr. Scalco was directed to confer with Colonel Kutz concerning the matter.

5. VICKSBURG MEMORIAL ARCH: Under date of April 22, 1920, the Commission received the following letter, together with drawings from Mr. Albert Weiblen, President of the Albert Weiblen Marble and Granite Company at New Orleans, for the Vicksburg Memorial Arch:

> "At the suggestion of Captain William T. Rigby, Vice-Chairman, Vicksburg Memorial Arch Commission, I have the honor to submit herewith full-size drawings of the proposed lettering on the frieze of each of the two faces of the Vicksburg Memorial Arch, for the construction of which the Albert Weiblen Marble and Granite Company of New Orleans, Louisiana, is the contractor, with request that The Fine Arts Commission give my company and the arch commission the benefit of its consideration and criticisms of the proposed drawings.
>
> With the assurance that your directions as to the work in question will be appreciated and carried out, I am".

The matter was referred to Mr. Kendall of New York City, as a committee, who reported that with two or three exceptions the letters were well drawn. The Commission approved Mr. Kendall's report and returned the drawings with a letter

to Mr. Weiblen. (Exhibit C).

6. CONGRESS OF THE NATIONAL HOUSING AND TOWN PLANNING COUNCIL: The Commission received an invitation from Henry R. Aldrich, Esq., Secretary of the National Housing and Town Planting Council, London, to be represented at the Congress to be held there June 3-11, 1920. Since it was found that no member of the Commission could attend the Congress it was decided in accordance with a suggestion made by Mr. Aldrich in such instances to subscribe for a copy of the Congress reports and papers.

7. INTERNATIONAL INTERCHANGE OF MODERN ART: Under date of March 17, 1920, the Commission received a letter from Honorable Alvey A. Adee, Second Assistant Secretary, Department of State, enclosing a despatch from the American Ambassador at London, together with a copy of a communication addressed to him by Francis Howard, honorary secretary of the International Society of Sculptors, Painters, and Gravers, at London, with reference to the renewed activities of that Society since the declaration of peace to bring about a more extensive interchange with foreign countries of the best modern art, and stating that the patronage and co-operation of America is desired in the effort to make this undertaking a success. The Commission expressed itself in sympathy with the movement initiated by the International Society, and so far as lies within the province of the Commission it is their desire to cooperate with that organization. (Exhibit D).

8. MEMORIAL TABLET, CITY POST OFFICE: The Commission received a request from the Chief Clerk of the Post Office Department for advice regarding the erection of a bronze memorial tablet in the City Post Office to commemorate the services of the employees of the Office who entered the military service during the war. A tentative site on the outside of the building on the southwest corner had been selected, but later the Memorial Committee agreed that it should be located on

the south central side of the main corridor of the building, and desired the approval of the Commission of Fine Arts in the matter. The Commission visited the City Post Office in the afternoon, and after having observed the site proposed suggested placing the tablet there, though without disturbing the architectural features of the building. (Exhibit E).

9. CAR STOP SIGN: Captain Peaslee, of the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, submitted a sketch for a combined car stop and Zoo Park sign, which is to be of wrought iron, and is to be erected by the Washington Railway and Electric Company at the entrance of the Zoological Park at Harvard Street. The Commission approved erecting the proposed sign, and suggested that the figure of the design be conventionalized.

10. LINCOLN MEMORIAL PLANTING PLAN: The Commission of Fine Arts considered the planting plan of the Lincoln Memorial and urged that large-sized specimens be secured, submitted its recommendation to the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds in the following report:

> "Assuming that large-sized choice material is to be used, the Commission advises that the most successful method will be to detail some one capable person to the duty of selecting the proper specimens, and seeing to their grouping. He should negotiate with firms who deal in large specimens of box, yew, etc., but we would recommend that he be particularly advised that he travel about the surrounding country and take notice of all available plants of the best variety and size to produce good planting. Some of the plants might be obtained in this way; some may be secured by dealing with nursery firms; but he should have the utmost freedom in obtaining where he can the very finest plants to produce the best possible effect. It is not possible to find such plants in any nurseries in this country, but they can be collected here and there from old country places near Washington. When selected probably they can be secured through dealers if desirable."

11. MEMORIAL FOR REAR ADMIRAL ROBERT E. PEARY, U.S.N.: Mrs. Peary, in company with her daughter, Mrs. Stafford, appeared before the Commission in be-

half of a memorial to Admiral Peary at Arlington. Mrs. Peary reported that she had made a contract with the Davis Memorial Company of Syracuse, N. Y., for a memorial which is to be a pedestal in the shape of a truncated pyramid, with a globe about two feet in diameter upon it; the globe to show a gold star indicating the North Pole. The Memorial is designed to be five feet four inches in height, which it is desired to increase to 5 feet six inches, and will be of New England granite. The Commission observed that the grave of Admiral Peary is on the hillside directly south of the Arlington Amphitheater, but noted that the lot is very small and should be enlarged if possible. The Commission requested that this matter be taken up with the War Department, with a view to securing additional ground, and requested also that before completing the work on the Memorial the designer and contractor give consideration to the landscape features. The Commission further requested that a model of the memorial be submitted at a future meeting.

12. EXHIBITION OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS: The Commission was requested by the American Institute of Architects in convention at Washington, May 5-7 to exhibit some of its plans at the Corcoran Gallery of Art to form a part of the first National Architectural Exhibition. The Commission exhibited a selected group of plans, and pictures, fifty in number, in Gallery "I" on the second floor. They were seen by about a thousand persons at the opening and judged to be the best part of the exhibition. The Exhibition, which is to continue for about two weeks, is open to the public, and a great many have availed themselves of the opportunity to see the plans.

13. HARVARD PARK (Reservation 309-C): In addition to the existing contour plan, a sketch plan of April 26, 1920, showing proposed grading, walks, coping, sections, and outline boundary planting, was submitted to the Commission, together

with a somewhat similar plan previously approved by the Commission on April 25, 1918. Supplementing these, was a pencil tracing previously submitted on May 9, 1919.

In conformity with the recommendation of the Commission on May 9, 1919, the plan of the 26th ultimo submitted showed a 15 foot cement walk with a border strip of brown stone and cement similar in treatment to the walk on the inner triangle of Reservation 309-G, where the mineral aggregate is exposed. This proposed walk was approved.

Mr. Greenleaf felt that a coping along the inner edge of the sidewalk bordering the park was perhaps desirable, but Mr. Moore was of the opinion that such a coping, as to the material and details, had best be left for decision until the question of the location, design and kind of material to be used for the proposed memorial fountain for this park was determined. Decision as to material and design of coping was withheld.

The proposed grading and outline planting were approved, with the exception of the perennial flower border along the Sixteenth Street side, which Mr. Greenleaf thought had best be omitted. In view of the contemplated future location of a memorial fountain in this park, it was the belief of the Commission that no walks other than the 15 foot walk should be built until the location and design of the above fountain had been determined.

14. RESERVATION 312-A: Three pencil sketches were submitted, A, B, and C. It was felt by Mr. Greenleaf that Plan B should be restudied so that the two smaller intersecting walks would center on the proposed drinking fountain, and thereby secure a happier relation of the intersecting walks.

15. FARRAGUT SQUARE: Two plans were submitted:

(a) Existing survey (checked April 28, 1920);
(b) Preliminary plan.

The preliminary plan was approved with the exception of the coping termination adjacent to the sidewalk bordering the turf panel. Mr. Greenleaf recommended the planting within the oval bounding the statue, a ground cover of Mugho Pine or Taxus cuspidata. This plan is to be again submitted.

16. EAST POTOMAC PARK (General Planting Plan for Golf Course): The plan submitted was based on the preliminary planting plan of April, 1919, approved by the Commission on November 21, 1919.

The plan, as submitted, aimed to secure a mixed deciduous planting of hardy high-limbed trees of distinctive character and scale, adapted to the peculiar site conditions imposed and so arranged as to secure a large mass planting effect commensurate with the scale of the park, meanwhile striving to secure several long, intersecting vistas of the water from each side of the golf course.

The planting list of trees proposed was commended as being the most suitable for the type of treatment required - a planting similar to the "intervale type" of New England where elms together with certain other deciduous tree predominate in large groups.

It was recommended by Mr. Greenleaf that the planting plan of the golf course should be considered as one complete problem rather than to design the planting for the portion now available for planting. Further he recommended that the planting of various species of willow trees be restricted to each side of this area between the Speedway and the Potomac River or the Speedway and the Washington Channel, featuring the major part of the planting on the course proper by the use of the Willow Oak, and the various Elms. A revision of this plan was recommended by the Commission.

17. ROCK CREEK PARK: Two plans were submitted:

(a) Preliminary Plan for Recreation Grounds (Brightwood Reservoir);

(b) Preliminary plan for Proposed Utah Avenue Extension.

These tracing cloth plans which were approved as of March 26, 1920, were identical with the paper plans previously submitted on March 26, 1920.

18. MCPHERSON SQUARE: Four paper preliminary sketch plans were submitted in addition to a survey plan. Also, a proposed development plan by Messrs. Vitale, Brinckerhoff and Geiffert, of New York City, was submitted. This plan was rejected by the Commission inasmuch as it was felt that the turf panel and the adjacent walks were not sufficiently large in scale and size respectively to be in accord with the pedestrian traffic requirements.

The two plans most favorably considered were those marked A and B. A restudy was advised combining certain desirable features of each.

The Commission adjourned at 2:30 p.m. to visit the Exhibition, the Lincoln Memorial, and the site proposed for the Roosevelt Memorial, at the end of Sixteenth Street near the District Line.

Approved:

May 10, 1920.

Dear Mr. Gould:

The Commission of Fine Arts, to whom was referred Bill H. R. 13311, "Providing for the adoption of a flag and floral emblem for the government of the District of Columbia," gave consideration to the Bill at their meeting on May 7th and respectfully report as follows:

Should Congress see fit to negotiate the legislation proposed the Commission suggest that in order to obtain a suitable design for a flag an appropriation of not less than $1,000 should be made. The subject of emblems is one requiring the study of an artist in addition to the consideration to be given by the District Commissioners and the Commission of Fine Arts. In this connection the Commission encloses, herewith, a copy of two articles which have recently appeared in respect to designs for coins and medals issued by the Government. The consideration set forth in these articles should govern also in designing a flag.

Very respectfully, yours,

(signed) Charles Moore.
Chairman.

Hon. Norman J. Gould,
House of Representatives,
Committee on the Library,
Washington, D. C.

Enclosures -
Article from Century Magazine for April, 1920.
" " Scribner's " " " , 1920.

EXHIBIT A.

May 10, 1920.

Dear Mr. Gould:

The Commission of Fine Arts, to whom was referred Bill H. R. 5131, "To further provide for the celebration of the victory of peace and to create a commission to secure plans and designs for a monument or memorial to the memory of the negro soldiers and sailors who took part in the late European conflict and who fought in the wars of the United States of America", and Bill H. R. 3613, "To provide a commission to secure plans and designs for a monument or memorial to the memory of the Negro soldiers and sailors who fought in the wars of our country", considered the same at the meeting of the Commission on May 7th, and respectfully report as follows:

In the opinion of the Commission all of the many bills relating to separate and distinctive memorials of the Great War should be held in abeyance until Congress shall determine upon a National Memorial to be erected in the District of Columbia. The Commission is brought to this result by the experience of Washington after the Civil War.

During the years that immediately succeeded that great struggle Army Corps and Divisions erected in Washington statues and other memorials to the men who had acquired distinction, and as a result individuals who played a secondary part have had memorials erected in their honor, while prominent figures in the history of the United States have received no such recognition.

When in the judgment of Congress the time shall come to signalize in some appropriate way the participation of the United States in the Great War the Commission will be pleased to report upon the question of a suitable site well related to other great memorials to the end that each such memorial shall enhance fully all the others, and at the same time receive enhancement from them. Thus unity and order together with great dignity will be achieved.

The Commission recognizes the eminent services rendered to this country by the Negro soldiers and sailors and also by other divisions of the population, but believes that the National should take precedence of any section of the population.

Very respectfully, yours,

(signed) Charles Moore,
Chairman.

Hon. Norman J. Gould,
House of Representatives,
Committee on the Library,
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT B.

May 10, 1920.

Dear Sir:

Your letter of April 22, and drawings of the proposed lettering on the frieze of each of the two faces of the Vicksburg Memorial Arch were brought before the Commission of Fine Arts at their meeting on May 7th.

The Commission gave the drawings careful consideration and with few exceptions find the letters well drawn. One letter of each on each sheet has been changed. There are suggestions for re-spacing, as shown and explained, on the drawings. Subject to these changes the drawings are approved.

The studies were made (you will be interested to know) in the office of McKim, Mead & White, and embody the result of the studies of that firm in the matter of inscriptions. The drawings are being returned by registered mail.

Respectfully, yours,

(signed) Charles Moore.
Chairman.

Mr. Albert Weiblen, President,
Albert Weiblen Marble and Granite Co.,
527 City Park Avenue,
New Orleans, La.

EXHIBIT C.

May 10, 1920.

Sir:

The Commission of Fine Arts acknowledge receipt of your letter of March 17th transmitting a copy of a despatch dated February 25, 1920, from the American Ambassador at London, together with a copy of a communication addressed to him by Mr. Francis Howard, honorary secretary of the International Society of Sculptors, Painters, and Gravers, of London, with reference to the renewed activities of that society, since the declaration of peace. The communication states that the patronage and cooperation of America is desired in the effort to bring about a more extensive interchange with foreign countries of the best modern art.

The Commission of Fine Arts are in sympathy with the movement initiated by the International Society, and so far as lies within their province will cooperate with that organization to accomplish the ends proposed.

Very respectfully, yours,

(signed) Charles Moore.
Chairman.

Hon. Alvey A. Adee,
Second Assistant Secretary,
Department of State,
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT D.

COPY

May 8, 1920.

Dear Sir:

Your letter of April 22, requesting the advice of the Commission of Fine Arts with regard to erecting a bronze memorial tablet in commemoration of the employees of the Washington city post office who entered the military service during the late war, was brought before the Commission yesterday, and the members visited the city post office during the afternoon.

The Commission suggest placing the tablet on the inside of the building in the position selected by the Postmaster. Inasmuch as the tablet was designed without reference to the architecture of the building, it should not be so fastened as to seem a part of the structure, nor should the architectural features of the building be disturbed by filling in at the sides of the tablet, as was suggested.

Recently a reference of a design for lamps for the Post Office tables was made by this Commission. The Commission referred it to the architects, Graham, Anderson, Probst & White, Railway Exchange, Chicago, for their consideration; and adopted and forwarded their suggestions. The result was a saving of expense and a decided bettering of the design. The Commission recommends that hereafter no change affecting the appearance of the Post Office building be made without first asking advice from the architects.

The Commission expresses regret that the design for the tablet was not submitted. Had it been, the Commission would have suggested giving prominence to the names of the men to be commemorated, rather than to emblems and battle scenes that have become stock designs for war tablets.

Respectfully,

(signed) C. S. Ridley.
Colonel, U. S. Army,
Secretary and Executive Officer.

Hon. Ruskin McArdle,
Chief Clerk,
Post Office Department.

EXHIBIT E.